Sixteen Dead Men: And Other Poems of Easter Week

Dora Sigerson Shorter

CARROLL
HELEN

To th sh

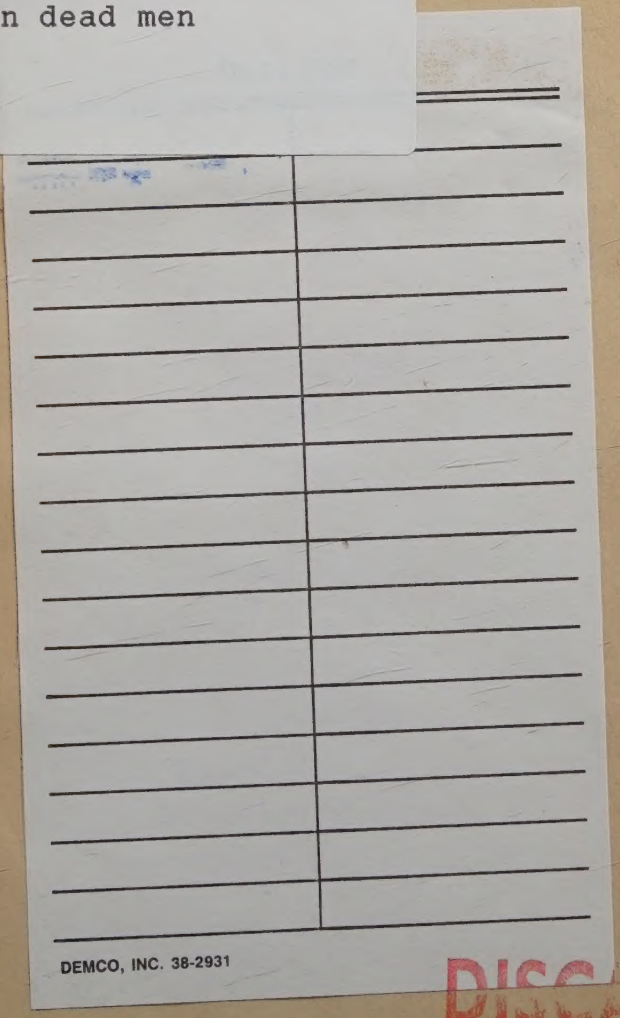
Trust

as

r

m

R 5450 .S7 A745 1919
Norter, Dora Sigerson d.
1918.
Sixteen dead men



DEMCO, INC. 38-2931

DISCARD

CORBETT [illegible] COLLEGE
[redacted]
3 5962 00095 08[illegible]

KEVIN BARRY

By Teresa Brayton

(An 18-year-old lad recently hanged by the British Government in Ireland. He met death fearlessly.)

They hanged young Kevin Barry when dawn
was in the sky,
And Christ Who hung on Calvary upon a
crossbeam high,
Doomed by a Roman Governor, was there to
help him die.

Beside him stood great Columbkille and his
high namesake, Kevin,
And Padraic opened wide the door that led
him into Heaven,
Where palm-crowned martyrs welcomed him
from Ireland's centuries seven.

There was no fear upon his face, no terror in
his eyes,
This lad of eighteen tender years, who dared
death's enterprise,
For God had touched his patient soul and
made him all-world wise.

So Kevin Barry only saw upon his scaffold
stair
Young Kathaleen Ni Houlihan with sham-
rocks in her hair;
And Christ Who strengthened his young
hands to do a hero's share.

And Kevin Barry only heard, above his death-
bell's toll,
And the priest's impassioned pleading that
God receive his soul,
The drum-beat of the conquering Gael around
the whole world roll.

THE FIRST SINN FEINER TO HANG—Kevin Barry, sentenced to death for his share in the murder of three soldiers in Dublin. Barry, a medical student, was only 18. (Photograph from Chicago Tribune Foreign News Service.)

EIRE TO EAMON DE VALERA

By Grania Bean Sheosaimh Ui Pluingcheid

Who stands on the hill
In the dark of the dawn?
Whose voice calleth still
As the voice of the horn?
The Unsleeping Lover
Guards mountain and streams,
My comrade—my brother,
The dreamer of dreams.

Who battles with fire
Who breasteth the flood?
On the wings of desire
And armored by God?
Round his head bowed by sorrow
The hero-light gleams.
Rise! bright dawns the morrow,
O dreamer of dreams!

RESURGAM

I hoped to see My Mother rise
In splendid wise before men's gaze.
I hoped to see her sons restore
The golden lore of other days.

And then I saw the Stranger's blight,
In all its cruel might come down,
Sundering friends and bringing ill
To every Irish hill and town.

And yet for all the sorrow now
That shrouds her brow, oh, enemy,
This land will rise in splendid wise!
You'll see, you'll see, you'll see!

THE REBELS

By Maura Quinn

They wear the green in Ireland—
They dare to wear the green,
They dare to tear off Erin's rags
And clothe her like a queen!
No longer wan and wistful eyed,
A beggar maid she goes—
But a rebel, proud, defiant,
She dares to face her foes.

Come, England, with your legions,
Come with your mighty fleet,
To fight those half-trained Irishmen
In Dublin's narrow street;
Bring all your famed artillery,
Shell brick and mortar down;
How well you guard small nations
They'll tell in Dublin Town.

They wear the green in Ireland,
The rebels true and brave—
"God never made one land," they said,
"To be another's slave!"
And so they struck for justice,
For life and liberty—
Those gallant men who wore the green,
And died for you and me.

They wear the green in Ireland,
And will for many a day;
Alive or dead in Ireland still
The rebels still hold sway!
For you cannot kill the spirit,
And you cannot quench the flame
That fired the men found worthy
To wear a rebel's name!

Then bring us here our rebels,
We'll crown them every one;
And thrill the future ages
With the glorious deeds they've done.
We live to answer for them,
To follow where they led;
To uphold our living rebels
And avenge our rebel dead.

SIXTEEN DEAD MEN

AND OTHER POEMS OF EASTER WEEK

BY

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

1866-1918

NEW YORK
MITCHELL KENNERLEY
MCMXIX

CARROLL COLLEGE LIBRARY
HELENA, MONTANA

COPYRIGHT 1919 BY
MITCHELL KENNERLEY

PRINTED IN AMERICA

EDITOR'S NOTE

This book is a sacred obligation to one who broke her heart over Ireland. Dora Sigerson in her last few weeks of life, knowing full well that she was dying, designed every detail of this little volume — the dedication to the tricolour, introduction, and the order in which the poems are printed. Any profit that may arise from the sale of the book will be devoted, as are all the copyrights of the author, to a monument which she herself sculptured with a view to its erection over the graves of the "Sixteen Dead Men" when circumstances place their ashes in Glasnevin. The editor is indebted to the courtesy of the George H. Doran Company, New York, for permission to reprint eight poems from "The Sad Years," by Dora Sigerson.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
DEDICATION THE TRICOLOR	9
INTRODUCTION THE LION	11
SIXTEEN DEAD MEN	15
THE SACRED FIRE	17
CONSCRIPTION	18
SICK I AM AND SORROWFUL	19
IN THE YEARS OF SARSFIELD	22
A CATHOLIC TO HIS ULSTER BROTHER	25
THEY DID NOT SEE THY FACE	29
THE WILD BEAST	31
THE WILD GEESE	34
THE QUEEN	36
THE CHOICE	39
THE OLD SONG	42
THE YOUNG VOLUNTEER	47
THE TREE UPROOTED	52

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE WREATH: EASTER, 1917	54
THE PRISONER	55
OURSELVES ALONE	57
KATHLEEN'S LOVER	60
THE FOE	63
EMPIRE BUILDING	65
LOUD SHOUT THE FLAMING TONGUES OF WAR	72
THE HILL-SIDE MEN	75
THE STAR	77
"TELLING THE BEES"	79
THE STORY WITHOUT END	81
THE DEAD SOLDIER	84

TO
THE TRICOLOUR

ABOUT this time there was let loose a great tumult in the city. Fire and battle held Dublin for about a week, and then from out of it all, above the crash of falling houses and the roar of guns, over the crackling flames rose the tricolour, and for a few mad days it shone into the hearts of the people.

And then a wounded prisoner of war, by the name of James Connolly, was slain, and so was disbanded the wonderful Citizen Army which had arisen from the awful conditions of bad housing and miserable wages so prevalent in Ireland.

So Labour was shot down because it dared to be discontented with its fortunes.

At the same time Pearse, the idealist, surrendered to superior forces to save his countrymen.

And Idealism was shot down because it dared to dream greater dreams than were allowed to small nationalities.

On Easter Monday Sheehy-Skeffington, the pacifist, was murdered secretly and without trial.

Thus Peace was shot down by a lunatic, because it got in the way of militarism.

So the bright flag fell from the high place where it had floated free. Yet what a tricolour were these three — Labour, Idealism, and Pacifism — how proudly it flew, so distinct in its colours, so perfect in its union, preaching its lesson for Easter to the people! At Easter, the time of Resurrection, not of Death. Yet out of Death comes Resurrection. Who will take it upon himself to crucify Labour, since Christ was the Son of a carpenter; Idealism, for Christ was an idealist; Peace, for did not Christ our Lord say "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God"?

INTRODUCTION

THE LION

IT is the lion's chief distinction to be called the king of beasts. I do not like the lion.

He looks magnificent pacing his cage at the Zoo, where only have I seen him, but I know him for a flesh-eater, his absent gaze and distraught air do not denote the philosopher or the thinker, his mind is fixed only upon the hours as they pass because they are punctuated by blood and bones at stated intervals. His loud voice which shakes the walls of his den would affright me more did it not wake humour in the thought " of all beasts but one you make most noise for your size, and that one is your little sister the cat."

The lion is a treacherous beast, you cannot trust

him to play fair, that is why we carry guns when we go to meet the lion. Some say the lion can be taught, but I do not believe it. The old lion does not learn with years. He will kill men in age as foolishly as he did when young, he makes no distinctions, the little man is as sweet to the lion as the big man, indeed, he prefers the smaller victim, he will take, too, a child or a woman without remorse.

Some say the flesh of man is not good for the lion, that it causes dangerous internal disorders. I do not know.

Some say the lion is afraid of the mouse, perhaps it is because the courage in so small a thing affrights him, if so tiny a beast can carry it before him his power is lessened, and courage is so contagious.

I have heard tell you can put your head in the lion's mouth, but would not advocate it as an amusement, sometimes the jaws close and the

head is gone, though after all people will say you were brave and the world's sympathies will not be with the lion. If the lion is the king of beasts he feeds only on the flesh of his subjects, if he is in a deceitful mood, which is usual to him, he plays with them in the manner of his sister the cat, they fancy he is offering them freedom when his mood is fiercest.

He feeds chiefly upon the little antelopes and gentle does that inhabit foreign lands. He crushes also the bones of men; even in his old age he does not realise the dreams, the nobility, the idealism which he gorges himself upon as he laps the blood of his victim.

Little beasts do not run to the lion asking his protection; standing alone in his khaki-coloured coat upon his crag he roars the threatened little ones to his side pretending love till he devours them.

I do not like the lion — he is the king of beasts.

CARROLL COLLEGE LIBRARY

SIXTEEN DEAD MEN

HARK! in the still night. Who goes there?
"Fifteen dead men." Why do they wait?
"Hasten, comrade, death is so fair."
Now comes their Captain through the dim gate.

Sixteen dead men! What on their sword?
"A nation's honour proud do they bear."
What on their bent heads? *"God's holy word;*
All of their nation's heart blended in prayer."

Sixteen dead men! What makes their shroud?
"All of their nation's love wraps them around."
Where do their bodies lie, brave and so proud?
"Under the gallows-tree in prison ground."

Sixteen dead men! Where do they go?
"To join their regiment, where Sarsfield leads;
Wolfe Tone and Emmet, too, well do they know.
There shall they bivouac, telling great deeds."

SIXTEEN DEAD MEN

Sixteen dead men! Shall they return?
"Yea, they shall come again, breath of our breath.
They on our nation's hearth made old fires burn.
Guard her unconquered soul, strong in their death."

THE SACRED FIRE

THEY lit a fire within their land that long was
ashes cold,
With splendid dreams they made it glow, threw in
their hearts of gold.
They saw thy slowly paling cheek and knew thy
failing breath,
They bade thee live once more, Kathleen, who
wert so nigh to death.
And who dare quench the sacred fire, and who
dare give them blame,
Since he who draws too near the glow shall break
into a flame?
They lit a beacon in their land, built of the souls
of men,
To make thee warm once more, Kathleen, to bid
thee live again.

CONSCRIPTION

THERE is a shadow on the head I love,
There is a danger lurks thy path upon,
It murmurs low as coos the mating dove,
It calls in grey and gathered clouds above,
For thee, for thee, Kathleen ni-Houlihan.

It hides in seas that beat about thy shores,
The wind in passing whispers and is gone,
And the brown leaf no summer will restore,
Flutters this cry on Winter's russet floor,
Danger to thee, Kathleen ni-Houlihan.

God of the seas disperse the gathered gloom,
God of the skies smile her sweet path upon,
God of the earth this danger swift entomb,
Slay the wild beast that creeps to bring her doom.
Save her, save her, Kathleen ni-Houlihan!

SICK I AM AND SORROWFUL

SICK I am and sorrowful, how can I be well again
Here, where fog and darkness is, and big guns boom all day,
Practising for evil sport? If you speak humanity,
Hatred comes into each face, and so you cease to pray.

How I dread the sound of guns, hate the bark of musketry,
Since the friends I loved are dead, all stricken by the sword.
Full of anger is my heart, full of rage and misery;
How can I grow well again, or be my peace restored?

If I were in Glenmalure, or in Enniskerry now,
Hearing of the coming spring in the pine-tree's song;

SICK I AM AND SORROWFUL

If I woke on Arran Strand, dreamt me on the cliffs of Moher,
Could I not grow gay again, should I not be strong?

If I stood with eager heart on the heights of Carrantuohill,
Beaten by the four great winds into hope and joy again,
Far above the cannons' roar or the scream of musketry,
If I heard the four great seas, what were weariness or pain?

Were I in a little town, Ballybunnion, Ballybrack,
Laughing with the children there, I would sing and dance once more,

SICK I AM AND SORROWFUL

Heard again the storm clouds roll hanging over
Lugnaquilla,
Built dream castles from the sands of Killiney's
golden shore.

If I saw the wild geese fly over the dark lakes of
Kerry
Or could hear the secret winds, I could kneel and
pray.
But 'tis sick I am and grieving, how can I be well
again
Here, where fear and sorrow are — my heart so
far away?

IN THE YEARS OF SARSFIELD

I WISH I were over the Curlew Mountains,
Marching to Sligo by valley and fen;
I wish I were back in the years of Sarsfield,
Tramping the rough roads with him and his men.

I wish that I stood upon Yellow Island,
Watching the camp that the Williamites made;
I wish that my good gun was pressed to my shoulder
And that my caubeen held the white cockade.

I wish I were out with "galloping Hogan,"
Happy a guide for my hero to be,
Encamped for the night on the Keeper Mountain,
Ready to guard with the brave rapparee.

I wish I had been in the woods of Cullen
In the dark night when the battle began;

IN THE YEAR OF SARSFIELD

I wish I had heard at the wan moon's rising
" Sarsfield the word, and Sarsfield the man."

I wish I were young at the siege of Limerick,
Holding the breach there and glad in the fight;
Ah, could I but see him, King William of Orange,
With his troops defeated ready for flight.

Had I but stood on the bridge of Athlone, there
Flinging the plank and beam into the wave,
Keeping the broken arch, as the last hero stood
Fighting the fight of death, one of the brave.

I wish I had fought in the flood of the Shannon
With the grim Dutchmen, to conquer or drown,
Left without shot or shell by the false Maxwell,[1]
Into the deep had that traitor gone down.

[1] One Brigadier Maxwell, in the Campaign of 1691.

IN THE YEAR OF SARSFIELD

I wish I had fought in the battle of Aughrim
By the black bog on the side of the hill,
Seeing there Ginkel's men fall to disquietude,
Failing with Sarsfield meant living still.

I wish I had flown with the Wild Geese across the sea,
Knelt on red Landen's plain, facing the foe;
Holding the dear head of Sarsfield on my heart,
Knowing from his brave blood heroes would grow.

Ah, had I sailed to far France out of Galway,
There on the deck the spy Maxwell to see,
Bishop or Luttrell never had stayed me from
"Tossing the Scotsman right into the sea."[2]

[2] Macaulay's "History of England," Ch. XVII.

A CATHOLIC TO HIS ULSTER BROTHER

IS there no bond of blood to you, my brother?
Who have called her ours, the ancient Mother,
And here we hope to rest from Life's temptation
Building of souls our patriotic Nation.

Can we not stand amongst the purple heather
To find that God we both revere together?
Beneath this sky can come no bigot preaching
To fling our lofty dreams to lowly teaching.

William or James, need we still hate each other
For their dead sakes, my Irish-hearted brother?
Can we not pray without fear of dissension
"God save our land" with but the same intention?

If we from Derry walls were flung defeated,
And you from Limerick town in speed retreated,

A CATHOLIC TO HIS ULSTER BROTHER

One God is ours no matter what religion,
One land we love and shall not have division.

Shall we divide? Ah, better take the token
Of Ireland's luck and leave the shamrock broken
Of one green leaf, when four brought joy upon it,
As Ulster lost — from Munster, Leinster, Connacht.

But Ulster lost with each green sod still crying
For those dear dead who left us dreams undying
Of Ireland's needs, O'Neill whose heart took fire
And joined the sacred flames of Hugh Maguire.

Shall we not cry " Lamh Dearg abu " and glory
In Cromwell's fall, in reading Clonmel's story,
Or by the " Yellow Ford " who cheered most loudly
As hand from hand we passed the same flag proudly?

A CATHOLIC TO HIS ULSTER BROTHER

Yea, we have gone with joyous hearts to follow
Men of your thought by mountain, hill and hollow,
Died for them, lived again, loved down the ages
To bless them yet upon historic pages.

Emmet and Tone! Ah, half our pride uprooted,
We were but dead if we such names refuted,
Our well-beloved, dear brothers of our Sireland,
We call with them " For God and Holy Ireland."

And do we mourn our Owen Roe less sadly,
Or hold Lord Edward's claim more loved or
gladly,
Because of " popish " ways of Owen's praying,
Or Edward went to other altars straying?

Do we forget or could our fond faith slacken
A patriot's glow in owning Joy MacCracken,

A CATHOLIC TO HIS ULSTER BROTHER

Who Belfast-born has helped the island's story
And shed from Antrim's hills a sunrise glory.

Mitchel or Meagher! Ah, hear the dear names
falling
On no deaf ears, we welcome to you calling,
"O dead long gone, O dead of recent slaying,
From your chill hands we take the banner, pray-
ing."

Where this dear land forbids us to forsake her,
Join with the one sweet voice to the same Maker,
"Our hate is one, our love is one the other,
Lead on! or follow, O my Irish brother."

THEY DID NOT SEE THY FACE

SOME on the pleasant hillside have thought
they saw thee pass,
As flings a cloud before the sun a shadow on the
grass.
They praised thy fairness and held dear thy meek-
ness and thy grace;
They only saw thy shade, Kathleen, they did not
see thy face.

Some on the purple mountains stood to see thee
speeding by,
As glides a sudden golden shaft across a stormy
sky;
And these were braggarts of their love within
thy dwelling-place;
They saw thy beauty, Rosin Dubh, they did not
see thy face.

But some in flames of battle strove their slender
weight to throw
Against the bayonet and the gun that hid thy only
foe;
They left for thee their earthly loves, these heroes
of thy race,
And died, as all must die, Kathleen, who once
have seen thy face.

So must thy grief be ever new who holds a love
like this,
That thrusts away a dear one's heart, a little
child's soft kiss,
That leaves behind an honoured home, a Moth-
er's fond embrace,
Till others seek again, Kathleen, to see thy hidden
face.

THE WILD BEAST

ONE spring as I went walking
By budding leaf and thorn
To see the sun a-shining
Upon an Easter morn;
My hound she gambolled by me,
Oft hunting in her play
Some small thing in the hedges
She found upon her way,
How splendid was her going
How happy was her joy,
I felt I could not chide her
Nor dared her play destroy.

Yet oft I called " Come hither,
I fear lest thou displace
Some hidden beast or reptile
All savage for the chase."
I scarce had spoken to her
And turned again for town

THE WILD BEAST

When we were in the shadows
  And fog and mist came down.
When from the gloom and darkness
  Some lion voice did roar;
He sprung upon our pathway
  To stand our road before.
I cried in vain contention,
  " O, let us go way,"
But to our further progress
  The red cat stood at bay.
My hound would not obey me
  So brave and fine was she
But sprang upon the wild beast
  To fight for liberty.

Oh, how my heart was beating
  So full of grief and fear
At thunder of the battle
  That fell upon my ear.

THE WILD BEAST

Oh, great and splendid fighting
Like to the times of Fionn,
Alas! uneven chances,
My dear one could not win;
And sudden to a silence
I opened eyes of pain,
With face towards her foe still
My faithful hound was slain.

But she has left behind her
A pup of splendid race,
And he shall bound before me
And take the other's place.
So I can go a-walking
'Mid budding leaf and thorn
To see the sun a-rising
Upon an Easter morn.

THE WILD GEESE

"Wild geese are very numerous in this district, especially around Lough Esknahinny."— Cork Examiner, December 12, 1916.

I WALKED by Esknahinny at the waning of the moon,
As star by star came peeping to some celestial tune.
The little waves crept to me to call and fall away,
O lone I was and lonesome to meet the breaking day.

I heard wind voices whisper and leaned to hear them speak;
I saw the moving shadows — and feared to turn and seek.
The slender reeds were shaking between me and the light,
And loneliness fell from me with the treasure of the night.

THE WILD GEESE

I heard dark wings flap by me towards the rising sun,
Dear birds so swift in passing I blessed them every one.
The wild geese had come back again, they passed me in the night.
Between me and the waning moon I watched them in their flight.

I had walked the paths of Kerry and dared not say the word;
I had trod the roads of Leinster all broken by the sword.
O Ulster, Munster, Connacht, He gave Who can restore,
The Wild Geese, the Wild Geese, they have come home once more.

THE QUEEN

I SAW her many years ago, my gladness and my grief.
She stood amongst the barley fields to bind the wayward sheaf.
She walked upon the mountain's side to draw the brown turf home,
She planted many famine crops within the peaty loam.
From rugged rocks and silver shore she gathered grey sloakeen.
She made the green earth brown again, and made the brown earth green.
She wearied in those striving years from morning until night.
Her fields grew wide, her stately home shone in the morning light.
But O, those hours of yesterday, mo storeen and mo crie,

I saw her turn her face away to hide her grief
from me.

I flew to her a while ago, my thousand joys — so
dear;
For ruin fell upon her house and I was full of
fear.
I saw wild fury seize her home, I heard a red
wind scream,
I saw the groaning roof-tree fall, the flame on
wall and beam.
I fell upon the broken way, struck down by chill
despair:
" My life's long love, my only joy, my dear be-
yond compare,
A thousand souls will bleed with mine, a thousand
hearts expire,
To see so fair a form as thine upon a martyr's
fire."

THE QUEEN

From out the glow, from out the flame, from ruin
fierce and wild,
I saw her come with dancing feet and glad face
like a child,
Her red-gold hair, her snow-white brow, her gown
of silken green:
Out through the ruins of her home, she walked as
would a queen.
Ni Houlihan, Ni Houlihan, she came a splendid
queen.

THE CHOICE

THIS Consul Casement — he who heard the cry
Of stricken people — and who in his fight
To lift the torture load from broken men,
And shield sad women from eternal night,
Went through lone, hot, and fevered foreign lands.

For doomèd Casement, slaves that he raised up
Pray with strong voices, so a wide world hears.
Men saved from anguish, women saved from shame,
He dried your children's tears!
He gave you life — for him lift pleading hands.

Sir Roger Casement, honoured for his years
Of stress and struggle, of fatigue and work,
What is the claim of his frail human needs

For arduous hours he did not shun nor shirk,
A King's reward, a royal friendliness!

For honoured Casement titles and renown,
A future great with promise, all life's page
Writ in gold letters, and a path so soft
One could not hear the coming of old age
To point an honoured tomb that nations bless.

Ah! Irish Casement, in the roar of war
That stung his blood and whipped his manhood's fire.
What did he hear upon red shaken earth,
Where little nations struggle and expire?
Some banshee cry upon the hot wind thrills!

And Roger Casement — he who freed the slave,
Made sad babes smile and tortured women hope,

Flung all aside, King's honours and great years,
To take for finis here a hempen rope,
And banshee cries upon far Irish hills.

THE OLD SONG

WHEN I was a young lad of happy sixteen
There came to my window the Cushla-mo chree,
And the song that she sang was the song of the wind,
And the song that she sang was the song of the sea.

"And will you come with me, a vic and a stor?
And will you come with me, alanna?" she cried,
"O, my father will rage and my mother will mourn,
If I take to the mountains to march by your side."

"O, your father must rage and your mother must sigh,
But I bid you follow and I am your queen."

THE OLD SONG

O, I stole from my window I held her so dear,
And I followed the wave of her garments of green.

My father did rage and my mother did sigh,
"Your way will be hard and your heart it will break,
Your feet will grow weary, your cheek will be pale,
If you go to the mountains for Grannia Wael's sake."

My years waned in prison, my rough bed was hard,
When I was a freeman my blood it was cold:
I met her, my true-love; I made her my wife:
O, home-weary was I because I grew old!

THE OLD SONG

O, the years flew in passing in peace and in rest,
And I watched my young son as he leaped and he ran,
O, proud was my heart as I dreamed me a dream,
I would wed him to fortune when he grew a man.

But when I was dreaming one eve in my chair
There came to the window the song of the sea,
The song of the mountains, the song of the wind,
And my son rose and answered, " Who calls upon me?"

" My son, if you listen your mother will mourn,
Your father will rage, and your cheek will grow pale,
Your wife will be grieving, your child weep alone,
If you follow the singing of poor Grannia Wael."

As he would not hear me his mother did mourn,
His child wearied for him, his wife's cheek grew
pale,
He was shot without pity at dawn of the day,
And the last words he spoke were, "God bless
Grannia Wael."

My grandchild is troubled, he calls from his sleep,
"Ah, Gran'father, Gran'father, what does she
say?"
"O, little one, little one, rest you secure,
The wind on the window it calls in its play.

"O, little one, little one, hush you and sleep,
'Tis the song of the wind and the cry of the sea."
"O, gran'father, gran'father, when may I go?
'Tis the voice of poor Grannia Wael calling to
me."

" O, your path will be rough and your prison bed
hard,
Your heart will be broken, your cheek will grow
pale,
You will die on the gallows when life is yet young,
If you list to the singing of old Grannia Wael."

" My path may be rough and my prison bed hard,
But my heart will be glad and my soul shall not
quail,
I shall die on the gallows with joy and with pride,
And my last breath shall whisper, 'God bless
Grannia Wael.' "

THE YOUNG VOLUNTEER

WITH a knock upon the window comes the young volunteer,
'Tis his step upon the threshold; " what is it brings you here? "
" Oh, will you up and follow, swift as the homing swallow,
By mountain hill and hollow? " said the young volunteer.
Said the brave volunteer, said the loved volunteer,
" Oh, will you up and follow with the true volunteer? "

Oh, I will not rise and follow with the young volunteer,
With my pockets full of money and my house so full of cheer.
Why should I go a tramping, with cold and windy camping,

THE YOUNG VOLUNTEER

On all my pleasures stamping with the young volunteer?
With this wild volunteer, with this strange volunteer,
Why should I go a tramping with this young volunteer?

With a knock upon your window comes the young volunteer,
'Tis his step upon the threshold, what is it brings him here?
" Oh, rise and march together, in shine or stormy weather,
With hopes you cannot tether," said the young volunteer.
Said the brave volunteer, said the loved volunteer,
" Will you up and march together? " said the true volunteer.

THE YOUNG VOLUNTEER

Yea, I will rise and follow with the young volunteer,
And open is my doorway, oh, welcome is he here.
Yea, I will go a drilling, how gladly and how willing,
With all my pulses thrilling, for the young volunteer,
With the brave volunteer, with the loved volunteer,
Oh, gladly go a drilling with the true volunteer.

Oh, fool, to rise and follow with the young volunteer,
Content we were and happy till he came calling here.
Thus all our prospects blighting, what is the use of fighting?
We go with foe uniting, not with this volunteer,

THE YOUNG VOLUNTEER

Oh, this false volunteer, oh, this mad volunteer,
All our placid progress blighting comes this wild volunteer.

Oh, since you will not follow with this young volunteer,
To fight for home and freedom, what are you doing here?
Why were you still delaying, thus your mother-land betraying,
While he rose her voice obeying did the young volunteer,
Did the true volunteer, did the loved volunteer,
While you were still delaying died the brave volunteer.

'Tis a ghost and but the shadow of a young volunteer,
He is dead and stilly sleeping, what should be haunting here?

THE YOUNG VOLUNTEER

'Tis but the storm winds flutter old dreams you
dare not utter
And false the hopes they mutter, and pale the
volunteer,
'Tis a dream volunteer, yea, a dead volunteer,
Old leaves that fly and flutter round a dead vol-
unteer.

Oh, be he ghost or shadow of a lost volunteer,
Though sad this heart and grieving, still welcome
is he here,
The greater his recruiting, who fell from cow-
ardly shooting,
I stand to him saluting, oh, my brave volunteer.
Oh, the dear volunteer, oh, this true volunteer,
All the greater the recruiting of this dead volun-
teer.

THE TREE UPROOTED

[IN MEMORY]

THE earth-bound giant now is free, is free;
The last fight over, and the last moan still;
No tale of snow-clad heights where great dreams be,
His exile heart can thrill.

Ah! how he cried with groaning branch and bough,
For that far land beyond the sunshine morn,
For that lost joy tilled earth will not allow,
That land where he was born.

Ah! how his heart that fought for freedom pined;
His leaves, like restless fingers, tried to hold
The trailing garments of the passing wind,
His struggle manifold.

The four winds heard and strove with mighty hands
To bear him back to that far northern height

THE TREE UPROOTED

Where he was born; loosed from his earthly
bonds,
He poised, a moment's flight.

Then to the wind in passionate embrace
His branches moved — out sung his parting
breath.
He leaned to freedom from his prison place,
Whose freedom was but death.

Better so lie, from this dire bondage free,
O! heart, who knew the silence of the snows,
Than stand alone, O solitary tree!
Where English greenwood grows.

Better to die than live in dull disgrace,
O! soul that dreamed the glory of the dream;
To be for sparrows but a resting place,
Who heard the eagle scream.

THE WREATH

[EASTER, 1917]

HERE on my path by some hard fate struck down,
When life at last held out full hands to me.
When the great dreams of younger years awoke
And dear, dead voices whispered "Liberty."
Ah, cruel blow, from which I stricken rise
And blindly stagger for that path again,
To wonder if 'tis worth the striving now,
Thus robbed upon life's highway and half slain.

Here I awoke to fear again the dead,
Whose tender faces held me as I slept.
Ah, well I knew who leaned above me there,
Into whose arms so pitifully I crept.
And I awoke, for Spring did cry, "Arise,
For birds within the green woods carol clear."
Then Easter came with wreath of lilies pale,
Placed on my heart the grief of yester-year.

THE PRISONER

ALL day I lie beneath the great pine tree,
Whose perfumed branches wave and shadow me.
I hear the groaning of its straining heart
As in the breeze its thin leaves meet and part
Like frantic fingers loosened and entwined;
I hear it whisper to the sighing wind,
"What of the mountain peaks, where I was born?"
As sharp tears drop I feel its falling thorn.

I see in the far clouds the wild geese fly,
Homeward once more, free, in the storm-swept sky.
Back to the land they loved, all, all, have gone,
How swift the flight by joy and hope led on.
"What of the mountain land where I was born?"
I cry, they pass, glad in the dawning morn,

THE PRISONER

Home to the moon-pale lake, the heath-clad
hill,
And give no thought for one imprisoned still.

All day I lie beneath the sad pine tree,
Whose groaning branches wave and shadow me,
Chained to the earth, the dark clay of the grave,
In helpless fashion feel its wild heart rave.
"Free, set free," I hear its moaning breath,
Where liberty means naught, alas, but death.
Ah, freedom is but death.

OURSELVES ALONE

ONE morning, when dreaming in deep meditation,
I met a sweet colleen a-making her moan.
With sighing and sobbing she cried and lamented;
"Oh where is my lost one, and where has he flown?

"My house it is small, and my field is but little,
Yet round flew my wheel as I sat in the sun,
He crossed the deep sea and went forth for my battle:
Oh, has he proved faithless — the fight is not won?"

And then I said: "Kathleen, ah! do you remember
When you were a queen, and your castles were strong,
You cried for the love of a cold-hearted stranger,
And in your fair island you planted the wrong?

"And oh," I cried, "Kathleen, I once heard you
weeping
And sighing and sobbing and making your moan.
You sang of a lost one, a dear one, a false one —
'Oh, gone is my blackbird, and where has he
flown?'

"Ah! many came forth to the sound of your
crying,
And fought down the years for the freedom you
pined.
How many lie still, in their cold exile sleeping,
Who sought in far lands your lost blackbird to
find?

"And many are caught in the net of the stranger,
And all but forgotten the sound of your name,
For other loves call them to help and to save
them:
They fell to dishonour — we hold them in shame.

"Oh, why drive me forth from your hearth into
exile
And into far dangers? Your house is my own.
Faithful I serve, as I ever did serve you,
Standing together, ourselves — and alone."

KATHLEEN'S LOVER

I WOULD I had a thousand tongues
To sing thy praise, to sing thy praise,
I'd teach the birds on ev'ry tree
To chorus the sweet melody,
For all my days, for all my days.
I wish I had a thousand tongues
To curse thy foe, to curse thy foe,
I'd pray each stormy wind and wave
His house to break, his ship to stave,
To lay him low, to lay him low.

I wish I had a thousands hearts
To love thee more, to love thee more,
Lest one should break before thy tears
Let others come to hush thy fears
And thee adore, and thee adore.
I wish I had a thousand hearts
To hate thy foe, to hate thy foe.
Lest one should dare in pity turn

Let others still with vengance burn
To lay him low, to lay him low.

I wish I had a thousand hands
To work for thee, to work for thee,
To bring thee fairest fruit and flower,
To pluck for thee God's golden hour,
To set thee free, to set thee free.
I wish I had a thousand hands
To strike thy foe, to strike thy foe,
I'd track him without rest or sleep,
My arm were strong, my thrust were deep
To lay him low, to lay him low.

I wish I had a thousand lives
For thee to live, for thee to live.
In foreign lands in ev'ry state
My days, my years, to make thee great
I'd freely give, so freely give.

KATHLEEN'S LOVER

I wish I had a thousand lives
To thee to fly, to thee to fly;
To praise, to strive, to fight, to fall,
And on thy name and God to call,
For thee to live, for thee to live.

THE FOE

MY foe did strike me, Lord, I am not meek,
I cannot turn to him the other cheek,
Rather to Thee for vengeance do I cry,
Tooth for a tooth, dear Lord, eye for an eye.

Had he but felled me, giving blow for blow,
My rage had little flame, my hate were slow,
I could forgive stood he to me alone,
But through those dearer souls he reached my own.

Oh, brave heads slain, grey locked and darkly brown,
I saw you bleed beneath the martyr's crown,
Dear eyes that closed on unfulfilled desire,
I saw you robbed of your celestial fire.

Pale lips that cried one prayer in parting breath,
I knew you dumb in silence and in death.

THE FOE

My foe hath struck me, Lord, I am not meek,
I cannot turn to him the other cheek.

EMPIRE BUILDING

SOMEHOW I never liked you, John, your ways were crude:
Your smile was pharisaical, your manners rude;
Although you prospered well in wordly things,
Ay, were on nodding terms with Czars and Kings,
I seem to see the counter and the store,
And all the shopman's manners learnt before
You donned the regal robes of finer folk,
And in your brain the strong desire awoke
To play the master where you were the man,—
Plain Hodge, make blue the plebeian blood that ran
To warm the grocer of those early days,
Who sanded sugar and who mixed his tea
Before he bowed in Sunday sanctity,
With that lank Scotsman who your partner was.
Ah, no, I never liked you, John, because
You were a braggart and a pharisee,
Held many slaves, yet prated "Liberty."

CARROLL COLLEGE LIBRARY
HELENA, MONTANA

EMPIRE BUILDING

Your sweated people toiled to make you great,
Swept out your store and laboured long and late.
Their pay was poor, their faces lined with care,
Of all good things you took the lion's share.
In foreign lands, half naked, they slaved on
To gather gold to heap your plate upon;
You'd swagger past, proud of their dull amaze,
In Royal purple, eager for all praise.

Oh, long ago, when you were yet a boy,
You always took the other children's toy;
And you were best at playing games of bluff,
And no one liked you, John; your ways were rough.
I well remember Kate, who lived next door,
Her pretty eyes and snowy pinafore,
Which oft you would mud-spatter and then call:
"Oh, see the dirty girl," to one and all.

EMPIRE BUILDING

A jealous and a greedy boy you were,
And loved to make a spectacle of her,
Because she never liked you, John, since you
To her sweet garden forced your rough way through.
She heard you beg: "Oh, Father, lĕt *me* go;
I'll teach her how to make the white flowers grow."
And always since I hear the same old cry:
"There's none so good, so fine, so brave as I."
Ay, even when I roam to some far spot
'Neath Eastern skies, by world and time forgot,
I see the dusky people creeping by,
Alarmed to hear your shout of "I, I, I."
"I'll show them how, I'll tell them what, and why;
I'll bid them how to live, and how to die."
And when I, yawning, seek some further shore,
Some Indian strand, I hear your voice once more:

" I'll teach them how to work, and how to pray."
Oh, John, you never think before your day
Rome was, Greece was — can one believe it true?—
Great Egypt died, and never heard of *you!*

How all the small folk hated you, big John!
As you grew fat their little pastures on;
And yet they quailed before you, or your state,
And walked behind you — all save little Kate!
She could not tame you with her gentle ways
Yet her right anger filled you with amaze.
When she would face you, giving jeer for jeer,
You struck her down, and laughed to see her tear.
With her great heart for pity not too strong,
Yet not too weak for anger at the wrong
You loved to plague her with, as when a child
You gave her grief if e'er you thought she smiled.
You snatched her flag, her gun, her little ships —

The very bread that touched her parted lips!
Her pretty chainey and her shining glass,
And all that took your greedy eyes, alas!
Then with rough promise sought to still her cry,
And named her "Vixen" to the passer-by.
Ah, with what care a seething pot you'd brew
A bitter draught none mixed so well as you;
You'd force her take, so, weakened, you might
cry:
"She's ne'er contented, yet how good am I."

The little Church wherein she loved to tell
Her pretty beads, I do remember well,
How you would push her out, and there would
stay,
With eyes uplifted, as you seemed to pray —
Ah! when, indeed, I most mistrusted you
Was when you prayed, whose Trinity I knew
The scrubbing brush, the belly, and the purse,

All badly served. Your cleanliness a curse
Of little minds, that have no thoughts to fill
The chambers of their brain, and have no will
But service to the petty things of life,
Destroy sweet Calm with their incessant strife,
Cleaning, yet never clean, they ever seek
To whiten sepulchres. Your table rude
With all its ill-prepared and heavy food
To feed your dull yet eager appetite.
Your purse well filled can shrink or can expand
To thirty silver pieces to your hand.

Yet, John, I must admit in many ways
You have your virtues not devoid of praise.
Could I forget sweet Kate who lived next door,
With sweetest eyes and snowy pinafore.
She was of finer clay — a child of dreams
Who knew the secret songs of hills and streams.
Made from the passions of the four great seas,

EMPIRE BUILDING

Lithe as the swaying of the storm-swept trees,
Sweet as the heather-bell on moorland height,
Blue were her eyes, her hair a clouding night.
What knew you, Hodge, of such a one as this,
Whose lips were lewd and had a ploughman's
kiss?
She'll never love you, John, howe'er you smile —
A sour grimace that hides the deeper guile.
Too often you her tender heart betrayed
For her at last to listen unafraid
Of some new plan to strike her down again,
To break her heart in plotting for your gain.
Yes, as I love her, John, I you despise
And loathe you for the sorrow in her eyes.
Ah, no, we'll never like you, Hodge, your ways
are crude,
Your smile is pharisaical, your manners rude.

LOUD SHOUT THE FLAMING TONGUES OF WAR

TA'N SIONAC AR SRAIDIB AG FAIRE GO CAOCRAC

Air—"The West's asleep."

LOUD shout the flaming tongues of war.
The cannon's thunder rolls afar
While Empires tremble for their fall.
Thou art alone amongst them all.
Where is the friend who for thy sake
Will on his sword thy freedom take?
The son who holds thy right alone
Above an Empire or a throne?

Ah, Grannia Wael, thy stricken head
Is bowed in sorrow o'er thy dead,
Thy dead who for love of thee
Not for some foreign liberty.
Shall we betray when hope is near,
Our Motherland whom we hold dear,

To go to fight on foreign strand,
For foreign rights and foreign land?

The Lion's fangs have sought to kill
A Nation's soul, a Nation's will;
From tooth and claw thy wounded breast
Has held them safe, has held them blest.
About thy head great eagles are,
They fly with scream and storm of war,
Their shadows fall, we do not know
If they be friend,— if they be foe.

For Lion's roar we have no fears,
We fought him down the restless years.
We watch the Eagles in the sky,
Lest they should land — or pass us by.
But, yet beware! the Lion goes
To strike our friends — to charm our foes.
By hamlet small, by hill and dale
The creeping foe is on our trail;

His face is kind, his voice is bland,
He prates of faith and fatherland;
Shall we go forth to do and die
For Belgium's tear, and Serbia's sigh?
Oh, Volunteers, through field and town
He seeks his prey, he tracks thee down;
His voice is soft, his words are fair,
It is the creeping foe, Beware!

Ah, Grannia Wael, in blood and tears
We fought thy battles through the years,
That thou shouldst live we're glad to die
In prison cell or gallows high.
Oh, cursed be he! who to our shame
Drives forth thy manhood in thy name,
O, WHILE THE LION LAPS OUR BLOOD
SHALL WE UNITE IN SERVITUDE.

THE HILL-SIDE MEN

O WERE my heart a little dog
I'd call it to my side
To hold it with a silken lead
And would not be denied.

For O it wandered far from me
By mountain, vale and glen,
How glad it marched the weary miles
Amongst the hill-side men!

Ah, were my heart a singing bird
I would not let it free,
It dare not dream of sunrise skies,
Or chant of liberty.

For, ah! it sprang cloud high to sing
From mountain, vale, and fen,
When first it heard the secret drums,
The hearts of hill-side men.

THE HILL-SIDE MEN

My hopes are lost, my dreams are fled;
How lone are vale and fen!
My heart lies cold within the grave
That holds the hill-side men.

THE STAR

[IN MEMORIAM P. P.]

I SAW a dreamer, I saw a poet,
On the red battle-field fell my slow tear,
"Lover of birds and flowers, singer of gentle songs,
Dying with men of war, what do you here?"
Languid his closing eyes looked to the breaking dawn
Where the young day peeped out through prison bars,
"I on a high hill stood singing a dear old song,
I fell to earth," he sighed, "grasping at stars."

He laid him softly down, cold was his paling cheek,
Silent and chill he grew as the dead are,
But from his folded hands on to the crimson earth
Glowing and shimmering fell a great star.
Out of the heavens there came a hand raising it,

THE STAR

Set it in the green sky for all to see,
There it shone purely bright, faithful as planets
shine,
There it sung loud and sweet " Come, follow me."

"TELLING THE BEES"

THIS is the son of the white morning singing,
Combing her silken hair's simmer of gold,
All of her slenderness wrapped in a gossamer
Green of the dawning sky, dear to behold.

"When the lime is in blossom the bees are busy,
Summer has come with her honey-sweet mouth;
The lime is in bloom and the hive it is silent,
Come little bees from the North and the South!

"Gather your store when the red sun is shining,
Gather the harvest so that you may feast,
The hive is nigh empty, the Queen she is weeping,
Come little bees from the West and the East."

I saw one go in the pale of the dawning,
In a fair May-time a-telling the bees,
Tapping the hive there she told of men dying,
Many a dear name she called to the breeze.

"TELLING THE BEES"

They are coming, the bees, for the time is in
blossom;
They are coming, the bees, from the West,
South, and East;
They hum "donas Sasan," they hum "Sonas
Eireann,
We gather the honey, prepare for the feast."

THE STORY WITHOUT END

BEFORE my time my kindred were
As felons in their land,
Because they claimed the liberty
That freemen understand.

Ere I was born in Dublin town
Men's hearts were still aflame;
They spoke of Allen and O'Brien,
And whispered Larkin's name.

When I slept on my mother's breast,
A little babe, and frail,
Young Duffy's hearse went slowly by:
He died in Milbank Jail.

When I could read, I spelt and knew
The lives of patriot men;
When I could write, my pencil traced —
"A Nation Once Again."

THE STORY WITHOUT END

I learnt of those who often knew
The baton and the cell,
Who asked for right by peaceful means —
O'Connell to Parnell.

And once when thro' the cheering streets
Some " felon " homeward came
I lit, amongst the gayer lights,
My candle's tiny flame.

When I was but a little child
I ran by Kickham's side;
I heard his bitter story told
In reverence and pride.

And when with years he passed away,
When life was young and fair,
I stood upon time's crowded path,
And met O'Leary there.

THE STORY WITHOUT END

I saw with pity and amaze
A craven party go,
Obedient to a Scotsman's word,
For Parnell's overthrow.

Before Kilmainham's bloodstained walls
I stood all cold and still;
I lived through all the awful night
That shadowed Pentonville.

If thus o'er *one* life's blotted page
Some neutral soul should bend,
He'll read to-day — as yesterday —
The story without end.

THE DEAD SOLDIER

Where the sword has opened the way the man will follow

"LOOK! they came, the triumphant army!
Over yon hill see their weapons peeping!"
Still I spoke not but my wheel sent turning,
I closed my eyes for my heart was weeping,
My heart was weeping for a dead soldier.

Who is he who looks towards me?
"'Tis no man but a gay flag flying."
Red was his mouth and his white brow thoughtful,
Blue his eyes — how my soul is crying,
My soul is crying for a dead soldier.

"Kneel ye down, lest your eyes should dare them,
Kneel ye down and your beads be saying."
"Lord, on their heads Thy wrath deliver,"
This is the prayer that my lips are praying,
My heart is praying for a dead soldier.

THE DEAD SOLDIER

" Best cheer the path of the men victorious,
For he is dead and his blade lies broken,
His march is far where no aid can follow,
And for his people he left no token,
He left no token, the dead soldier."

The way of the sword a man can follow,
See the young child with his gold hair gleaming.
When falls the oak must the acorn perish?
He lifts the blade and his eyes are dreaming,
He dreams the dream of the dead soldier.

THE END

21149

Shorter, Dora Sigerson

Sixteen Men - and other poems of Easter

DISCARD
CARROLL COLLEGE LIBRARY
HELENA, MONTANA

C0-EJP-587